

Public Law 101-469
101st Congress

Joint Resolution

Oct. 30, 1990

[S.J. Res. 323]

Designating November 11 through 17, 1990, as "Geography Awareness Week".

Whereas geography is the study of people, their environments, and their resources;

Whereas the United States is a truly unique Nation with diverse landscapes, bountiful resources, a distinctive multiethnic population, and a rich cultural heritage, all of which contribute to the status of the United States as a world power;

Whereas the leadership of the United States in world affairs is threatened by a lack of understanding of the locations and significance of historic changes occurring around the globe;

Whereas a knowledge of geography provides a "Window on a Changing World" and a way in which to understand events and their impact on the United States;

Whereas the United States is a Nation of worldwide involvements and influence, the responsibilities of which demand an understanding of the lands, languages, and cultures of the world;

Whereas geography today offers perspectives and information in understanding ourselves, our relationship to the Earth, and our interdependence with other peoples of the world;

Whereas the first federally funded National Assessment of Educational Progress survey revealed a "disturbing geography knowledge gap" among 12th graders in the United States;

Whereas this survey also indicated that many students did not know that the Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico, or that the Panama Canal shortens sailing time between the east and west coasts of the United States, nor could they identify Jerusalem on a regional map, or name the three oceans moving east around the globe from Africa;

Whereas departments of geography are being eliminated from institutes of higher learning in the United States, thus endangering the discipline of geography in this country;

Whereas, while geography as a distinct discipline has virtually disappeared from the curricula of schools in the United States, it is still being taught as a basic subject in other countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the Soviet Union;

Whereas an ignorance of geography, foreign languages, and cultures places the United States at a disadvantage with other countries in matters of business, politics, the environment, and global events;

Whereas one-third of adults in the United States cannot name four of the sixteen North Atlantic Treaty Organization member nations, and another one-third cannot name any; and

Whereas national attention must be focused on the integral role that knowledge of world geography plays in preparing citizens of the United States for the future of an increasingly interdependent, interconnected, and rapidly changing world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the week of November 11 through 17, 1990, is designated as "Geography Awareness Week", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved October 30, 1990.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 323:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 136 (1990):

Sept. 28, considered and passed Senate.

Oct. 16, considered and passed House.